



*Contact:* Nancy Benecki, Public Information Assistant  
(201) 460-4662 nancy.benecki@njmeadowlands.gov

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### **NJMC to Contract with Rutgers University to Study Pollutants in Kearny Marsh**

LYNDHURST, N.J. – The Board of the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission today approved contracting with Cook College at Rutgers University to identify all sources of pollution at Kearny Marsh in addition to the defunct Keegan Landfill, which is now slated for containment. The NJMC appropriated \$100,000 for this one-year study to examine how contaminants from nearby areas could be transported into the Kearny Marsh.

“The study of Kearny Marsh will ensure the full recovery of that precious ecosystem,” said NJMC Chairman and New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Commissioner Charles A. Richman. “We already have long-term plans for the restoration of the marsh, which includes the closure and sealing of the neighboring Keegan Landfill, water level controls, and dealing with pollutants already in the wetland sediments. This study will make sure we have covered all our bases in locating and stopping further pollution in this marsh.”

A research team from Rutgers will take groundwater samples from six different locations throughout the marsh, collected quarterly over a one-year period. Each stormwater sampling station will be sampled during a storm event quarterly during a year’s time. The study also will produce a water quantity and quality model to assess the impact and consequences of different land use scenarios surrounding the restored marsh.

The NJMC has begun a long-term project for the restoration of the Kearny Marsh and the remediation of the Keegan Landfill. The 110-acre landfill was never properly sealed, therefore allowing contaminants including zinc, mercury, chromium, PCBs and other pollutants to leach into the marsh. The NJMC will transform this site into a green hilltop recreation area using environmentally friendly design and management. The 500-acre Kearny Marsh, having lost vital habitat due to damaging water levels and constant pollution, will be rehabilitated into a first class nature refuge suitable for canoeing, science education and wetlands exploration for all ages.

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This summer, scientists from the Meadowlands Environmental Research Institute, NJMC's scientific arm, began a three-year study testing the ability of a clay material called Aquablok, to trap contaminated sediments in the marsh.

The Rutgers study is the final analytical piece and will ensure that after existing pollution in marsh sediments are dealt with, water levels are corrected, and the major pollution source of the Keegan Landfill is contained, no further pollution sets the marsh back.

“Almost 30 years ago, the Kearny Marsh was considered the best freshwater marsh in the state by the New Jersey Audubon Society. Years of neglect and pollution have severely damaged the delicate habitat at this freshwater site,” said NJMC Executive Director Robert Ceberio. “The New Jersey Meadowlands Commission is fully committed to restoring this site to serve as the southern gateway to the 8,400-acre Meadowlands environmental preserve. We are already exploring projects, such as capping contaminated sediments in the marsh, to deal with the toxic legacy at this site. We need to take this extra step to make sure our work endures and this marsh remains in its previous splendor.”

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